**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY**
**WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**May 28, 2024**

**OPEN SESSION – Elk Room**
**4:30 P.M.**
**NOTE:** The recording and transcription of this meeting are available on the County website at www.ccgov.org/council.

**PRESENT:** Council Members: Robert Meffley, Rebecca Hamilton, Jackie Gregory and Donna Culberson (virtually); David Culver, Council Manager; Terry Hale, Council Assistant, members of the administration and members of the public.

**Call to Order**
President Gregory called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm and announced that there were three Council Members present in Chambers, one attending virtually and one absent, which constitute a quorum.

**Approval of Minutes**
On a motion made by Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Council work session of March 26, 2024, as presented. The motion passed 3 to 0, with one present virtually and one absent.

**Presentations**

a. FY25 Budget Discussion

President Gregory asked if the administration had any further comments on the FY25 Budget and Director of Administration stated they did not but thanked all the Departments and Agencies who presented during the budget workshops.

Vice President Meffley requested clarification on the Department of Community Services budget as it related to Fund 408 and specifically on the actual cost of animal control and how funds are moved during the year. Director Overbay outlined how the non-profit funds work and would provide the actual annual costs for animal control. Councilwoman Culberson inquired if animal services will still accept donations and Director Overbay noted they do accept them.

Councilwoman Hamiton inquired as to the exact amount of the tax decreases and Director of Finance Shon McCollum noted the decrease is basically one cent per hundred. Vice President Meffley inquired on the 10 million dollar tax credit and the potential need to front fund the North East Middle and High School projects and Director Overbay noted the State is still paying the committed amount, however, the funding was deferred by the State to future fiscal years so the County may need to reach an agreement with the State on front funding and receiving reimbursement in later fiscal years. He also noted the tax cuts and rebate is staying with County Executive's commitment to reduce taxes and help taxpayers during these difficult inflationary times. Vice President Meffley noted he does not oppose the rebate but wants to make sure we remain on solid fiscal ground and the North East school projects can go forward. Director Overbay noted the discussion on the North East school projects will be ongoing with the State to ensure they are completed. President Gregory inquired if the Capital Improvement Program reflects the changes in the funding for the North East school projects and Director Overbay noted it does not since the funding issue is just now being reviewed and an amendment will be forthcoming once it is resolved. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired if the front funding will be the only option and Director Overbay noted it is one of several options being reviewed that also includes deferring some of the build to future years, build the high and middle school at different time intervals or other combinations. Director Overbay stressed this is still being discussed because of the various fiscal issues. Councilwoman Hamilton inquired on the initial State commitment and Director Overbay noted the State did front fund 44 million, but the remaining 50 million in State funds were deferred out several fiscal years because of State funding issues. Director Overbay noted that funding must be fully in place before the final contracts are awarded. President Gregory inquired if the project is front funded do those funds need to be moved into a committed fund and Director Overbay noted it would be pay go funds and that a Memorandum of Understanding would need to be reached with the State. Councilwoman Culberson asked for confirmation that if the school projects are front funded that the funds would be returned directly to the County's budget in the out years and Director Overbay noted they would and that would be in any agreement with the State.

b. Charter Review

President Gregory reviewed the report that was received from the Charter Review Commission and again thanked them for the time they put into the report. President Greogry began to review the proposed changes as outlined in the report and that any changes required Council approval as well as voter approval. She noted Article 1 did not include any changes at this time.

President Gregory noted Article 2, Section 201 recommended that Council be expanded to 7 members, 6 in district and a President elected at-large and Section 404 required in-district voting. Councilwoman Culberson noted she does not support the expansion of the Council. Vice President Meffley indicated he preferred in-district elections. Councilwoman Hamilton indicated that the expansion is not needed at this time based on the current population and that she prefers the at-large elections. President Gregory noted Section 302 be amended to require being a citizen for 3 years instead of 2 and Council did not feel this needed to be revised. President Gregory noted the report recommended three consecutive term limits be imposed on Councilmembers in Section 206 and Council agreed that this should be considered. President Gregory reviewed Section 207 and the recommended increase in Council compensation. Councilwoman Culberson opined that it should not be increased and Vice President Meffley noted, if passed, should not be effective until 2028. Council noted that this should be a consideration. President Gregory noted Section 209 was recommended to be revised to reflect that vacancies are filled based on your party affiliation at the time of filing. Council noted they should also be considered. President Gregory noted that Section 213 was recommended to be changed to outline the Council Manager position and require that Council hire legal counsel. Council Manager Culver noted the discussion by the Review Commission on this issue and noted Council already has this authority to hire Counsel to Council but this makes it mandatory. Vice President Meffley noted this should be done and President Gregory noted that this is already provided for and is not necessary. She also requested the Finance Department provide the previous costs for legal services prior to moving forward.

President Gregory noted in Article 3, Section 302, the report recommended that this section should be repealed and reenacted to give better clarification on Legislative Sessions and provide for a Council recess. She noted Council already has this authority and Council agreed no action was necessary at this time.

President Gregory noted Article 4, Section 404 also recommended term limits for the County Executive to 2 terms. Councilwoman Hamiton noted that it should be the same as Council and set at 3 consecutive terms. Council agreed to consider this as a possible amendment. President Gregory indicated the report recommend Section 405 be amended to increase the number of years you need to be a legal citizen of the United States and Council agreed this was not necessary at this time. She also indicated the report recommended the salary of the County Execuitve be increased and clearly note the benefits in Section 406. Councilwoman Culberson noted she thinks this should be considered and Council agreed. President Gregory also indicated that Section 407 recommended clarifying who fills vacancy and Council again noted this should be considered. President Gregory noted Section 411 was recommended to be changed to add qualifications to the County Atorney and removed the language as it relates to Council. Councilwoman Culberson and President Gregory were concerned about the costs and Vice President Meffley noted this will need to be done at some point. President Gregory noted Section 412 was recommended to be changed to two legislative sessions instead of 30 days for appointments and Council agreed this should be considered.

President Gregory noted in Article 5, Section 501 the report recommended additional language for the Finance Director and Council agreed this was not needed. She also noted the report recommended changes to Section 502 and Council agreed this was not needed. President Gregory noted the recommended change for Section 504 for when the budget is due to Council and Council agreed that this may need to be changed at some point, but not to take action at this time. President Gregory noted the recommended change in Section 516 on contract review and Council agreed this should be considered.

President Gregory reviewed the comments on Article 6 and 7 and noted no specific changes were recommended at this time.

4. Presentations
    a. Monthly Review of County Contacts (Section 516)

Director of Finance Shon McCollum reviewed the contracts over $100,000 for March and April. Director McCollum noted that five contracts in March were above this amount and four were for Public Works including two for the landfill cell construction, one for road paving and one for pump replacements. He noted the fifth contract was for Information Technology for camera upgrades at the Detention Center. Vice President Meffley inquired if they were all competitive bids and Director McCollum noted two were not because they were proprietary repairs or upgrades.

Director McCollum noted that in April six contracts were awarded, including 1 for Public Works for the new landfill cell, one for IT for broadband expansion, 1 for Community Services for animal services and 3 for Facilities for roof replacements, parking lot improvements and the State's Attorney renovations. Director McCollum noted one bid was for proprietary repairs.

Councilwoman Hamilton had to excuse herself at 6:00 pm for another engagement.

**Council Manager Report**
Council Manager Culver noted the updated Council Manager report is in the packet. He also noted that Christine Palmer, who works in Facilities, will be replacing Terry Hale after her retirement in July.

**Council Member Items**
Vice President Meffley noted he attended the MRDC Meeting and that MRDC will be receiving funding to match the CCPS funding for Pre-K students. He also thanked everybody who offered input to the FY25 Budget. He noted that on May 25 he attended the Elkton Memorial Day Parade. He also noted that the Rising Sun and Bo Manor Graduations are upcoming and he will attend. Vice President Meffley noted he had to excuse himself to attend another event at 6:15 pm.

President Gregory congratulated all the graduating seniors and noted those students that received the Council scholarships. She noted she attended the Memorial Day events at the Port Deposit VFW on May 25 and the North East VFW on May 27.

Councilwoman Culberson thanked everybody for attending and noted she was out of town and that is why she attended virtually this evening.

**Adjournment**
Councilwoman Culberson made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by President Gregory. Council President Gregory adjourned the work session at 6:18 pm.

The next County Council Work Session will be held on Tuesday, June 4 at 4:30 pm in the Elk Room of the County Administrative Building. The session will be livestreamed on the County Council's webpage at www.ccgove.org/council.

Approved:
Jackie Gregory
Jackie Gregory, Council President

David M. Culver
Council Manager